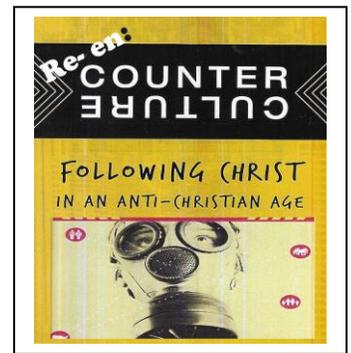


# Romans 13 Re-Encountering-Culture 'The Prayer 20/20 Impact' March 1, 2020



Dear Praying Friends, and Partners In Prayer Team,

*“Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for whoever loves others has fulfilled the law.” **Romans 13:8 (NIV)***

*“Keep out of debt and owe no man anything, except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor [who practices loving others] has fulfilled the Law [relating to one’s fellowmen, meeting all its requirements].” **Romans 13:8 Amplified Bible***

*“My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in Me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as You are in Me and I am in You. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that You have sent me. I have given them the glory that You gave Me, that they may be one as We are one.”*

**John 17:20-22 (NIV)**

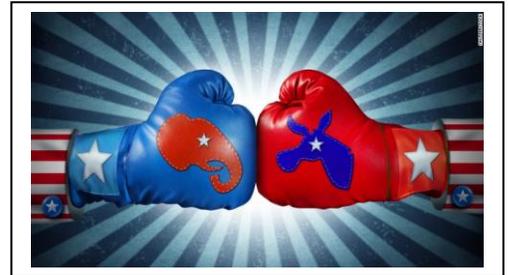
So, the question that everyone wants to know is, “Was Jesus a Democrat or a Republican?” You know that there is an old saying in our society that goes, “Don’t mix politics and religion.” Would you believe that I find it difficult to stay away from religion in church? I also have found it very easy to stay away from politics in church until today. But when something Jesus says specifically intersects something we are wrestling with in our culture, I have to talk about it. It will be to the words of our Savior that we will look and open Bible passages which very specifically help us answer, “Was Jesus a Democrat or a Republican?” And the division that we find in our nation is in our churches today. If this isn’t a question that causes reaction in today’s counter-cultural world, then I don’t know a better one. I do know that I need you, prayer team, to really intercede and pray for me today! I am rushing into a subject where angels fear to tread. I’m definitely setting myself up for attacks from people and our spiritual enemy. So, please pray. I was reading from Puritan John Bunyan’s book on prayer this week. Aside from knowing that he was the pastor that wrote *Pilgrims Progress*, that wonderful allegory of the Christian life, did you also know that he was in prison for preaching God’s Word against the religious and political establishment? So as you read this, enter a dank, dark, smelly prison cell. I want to share an insight to what he said:

*“Prayer is a sincere, sensible, and an affectionate pouring out of the soul to God, through Christ, with the strength and assistance of the Holy Spirit. Prayer has in it a sensibleness of diverse things; sometimes sense of sin, sometimes of mercy received, sometimes of the readiness of God to give mercy. It is not, as many take it to be, a few babbling, prating, complimentary expressions, but a sensible feeling and pouring out of our hearts. When the affections are indeed engaged in prayer, then the whole man is engaged, and that in such sort, that the soul will spend itself to nothing, as it were, rather than go without that good desired, even communion and solace with Christ. There is in prayer an opening of the heart to God. We see emptiness in all things under heaven; that in God alone there is rest and satisfaction for the soul.” (Prayer, pg. 14-15)*

If we were in an iron cell because we were preaching our faith, we would perhaps be more focused on being out of the cell and in a better place. We probably would think twice before preaching about politics and religion too. And this Sunday, I feel apprehension of wanting to be in a better place, but if we realize that it causes us

to dig deeply into Christ, and we cry out for assistance and strength from God's Holy Spirit, then we know this is a place we need to be. So pray for hearing ears. Pray for my heart to be absent of pride. Pray that I can have courage. I don't want to rush into the pulpit and just preach words that I've learned. I want to spend time in prayerful reflection over what I've studied to seek God about how that text applies to us. Will you pray that the truth of God's Word ministers to our hearts and minds? As we all stand in front of the "mirror" of God's Word (James 1:23), I am asking God to change my heart, not so much the hearts of others. Help me to see where my secret rebel soul and heart pretend to have things right, yet I can't walk away from something the Spirit shows me to change in His mirror so I can be more of a reflection of Jesus today. I have always been encouraged by my Pastor, the same one who taught me to pray hidden behind the cross, to **"Look in the mirror before you stand in the pulpit."** So, as we all come to God's mirror, pray that we will be seeking that Christ will be seen, and we will be hidden behind the cross, and be sure that we are not deceiving ourselves and pointing fingers towards others. Here are the words of James: *"Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do"* (James 1:22-25). So loved ones, just as we didn't come to church today without looking into a mirror and fixing our appearance, we need to let God fix our rebellious souls and hearts. And believe me, "I need your prayers today as I preach!"

So, back to our question: "Was Jesus a Democrat or a Republican?" Before I give us the answer to that question, I want to point out some very obvious issues with the question itself. First, why would anyone ask this question? Is it because people want Jesus (in some way or form, not necessarily the right way), and they want Jesus to agree with what they feel are important issues deep in their hearts? Secondly, the question also brings out an issue of "division" that has formed over the years in our country. An aisle of divisiveness exists, and we want to know which side Jesus may be on. There is a battle of counter-culture thinking that has taken precedence in our generation of America. We have definitely seen that our country, which as the only country in the world, was started and founded by a majority of God-fearing and moral men and women who sought religious freedom from the tyrannical establishments of the current government and religious establishments. Look at the French Revolution which shows that if people want democracy without a Biblical guideline, what will happen?



We have witnessed in this generation the flip from a "Biblical or moral" mindset to one that is more worldly and anti-Christian. Do you remember the Sunday after the 2016 election? There were a lot of churches that had differing kinds of music. Some were singing praises, and some were not. Everyone was in shock- both Democrats and Republicans on both sides of the aisle. A pastor shared that that Sunday he received several text message from his congregation saying this: *"I came to church this morning looking for reassurance. I'm scared! No one even mentioned the election. I feel abandoned by my church!"* Now, before you start judging and name-calling this individual, you have

to remember something, that he or she is a brother or sister in Christ! And you don't know which perspective of Democrat or Republican that he or she is. And the first question we need to ask is, "Do you see that this person has a real fear?" I can't believe that there will not be more elections which leave Christians feeling such fear again. As a pastor who received this text, he felt terrible. This uncomfortable fear is a reality. So, what exactly do we fear? The answer on the surface is, we fear the things that are a loss. Fear comes because of a loss of something; no matter who you are. As a believer, we experience fears of all kinds. And isn't it true that God doesn't want us to live in fear? "*For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind*" (2 Timothy 1:7). The most used commandment of God in the whole Bible is "Fear not!" We need to remember that we live in a world that as it flows counter-cultural to the Christ follower, we will see people face fear in a lot of ways. Fear of loss of control. Fear of loss of opportunities. Fear of loss of income. Fear of loved ones dying and death. Fear for our children. Fear of losing our freedom and respect. Fear of things that might happen. Fear what already has happen. So we all fear! In this season in life, the world peddles to our fears. Commercials are all created to produce fears. And in this time and season, we need to stand against the fear that would divide brothers and sisters in Christ. We must be careful we are not victims. We must be careful that we are not divided. If Satan can get us as believers to be focused on the things that divide us, he knows that our church will fail to be a light for Christ, and will not be the salt for the ever-rotting, degrading of our dark and fearful, hapless world. If Satan can divide us, we can't bring people to Christ. That is the enemy's goal! Don't forget it. So we will be looking today at the three things that Paul and Jesus tell us we need most to keep us from being divided as a body of Christ, and help us remain effective for the gospel of grace and salvation.

Back to our question, "Was Jesus a Democrat or Republican?" Do you want the answer? Here it is: **He was and is neither and never will be!** I don't know if I can put a "God forbid" into that or not. So before you argue with me, give me a chance to explain the truth of this answer first, and then explain why you may not like the answer.

First, the truth of the answer, ask yourself, "When was Jesus born?" He was born back in the first century, not 2020 in America! So it is first of all impossible for Jesus to be a Democrat or a Republican. He can't be. Think about how good and gracious it is that God didn't allow Jesus to be born today. If we know that Jesus wasn't either of those parties, think about what amazing relief it gives us. And we know that God sovereignly sent Christ to be our Savior in the right and specific time of human history. Remember our Christmas passage, the longest Christmas sentence in the Bible: "*But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law*" (Galatians 4:4-5). And it may surprise you that it was about 1800 years before God allowed the United States to be born a great little nation. So the conclusion is that Christ could not be a Republican or a Democrat because neither existed. Also, Jesus wasn't born in a world under a Democratic Republic, but He was born into a world under the slavery and iron oppression of Pax Roma under the oligarchy and kingly rule of a Roman doctorial emperor. "Well," someone may say, "if Jesus was born in today's culture and under our government, I could tell you which party He would be." Really? We can do that? Some of us may be really frustrated to know that when we go to heaven, there will be no voting ballots or decisions by the people for the day or events of eternity. In fact,

when Christ comes, Isaiah said, *“And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this” (Isaiah 9:6-7).* He will be the King! He will reign! He will not reign as the wicked men of this world, but it may surprise you to know that the perfect government for eternity is a righteous, just, rule of a monarch who is King Jesus! So, let Him take the government on His shoulders! You take the government off your shoulders. You can’t carry that weight of the world on your shoulders! Are you willing to give Him the rule of your life and take it off your shoulders? Are you willing to cast yourself at His feet? Remember, *“Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” (Philippians 2:9-11).* We will either bow in worship today because we received Jesus as our Lord and Savior, or we will bow in later days in judgment for our sin and the wrath of our sinfulness, at the White Throne of Judgment (Revelation 20:11-15). Yes, it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. So are we willing to be the light that brings others to Jesus? Are we able to do that if we are fighting and divisive and divided against ourselves?

I have had many people say they know the answer to that question. I want to share with you some of the honest answers I’ve heard this week: “I believe Jesus was a Democrat because He rode a donkey, not an elephant at the Triumphant Entry.” And, “I believe Jesus is a Republican because we will all ‘tr-i-ump’ in Christ.” I also heard sincere people say, “I believe He was Democrat because Jesus would have cared about the poor and needy; He cared about social injustice, and He had mercy on the homeless, the immigrant, the weak, and those who needed to be free.” I also heard: “Christ would be a Republican because He valued the truth. He would have believed in the freedom to protect ourselves, to bless us as a people of great privilege and freedom.” There are some folks that believe to be affiliated with a party is to be opposed to Christ. We need to kill that thought right at the start.

There are very sincere and born-again believers who are Democrat and Republican. Did you know that when I was a boy, I believed that the aisle in our little rural Baptist church with two sections of pews was because the Democrats sat on one side, and the Republicans sat on the other. The aisle divided people. And you know what? I thought I was right because the same people always sat in the same place. They never ever.... sat in another place! And one time when my dad changed our seat to the other side of the church. I said, “We can’t sit over here, mom’s a Republican!” Dad, said



laughingly: “It’s okay, I’m a Democrat.” Do you know that I was shocked to learn that I lived and grew up in a family of born-again parents and one was Republican and one was Democrat? I remember asking my dad and mom just before my dad died in 2018, “How did you manage?” His answer was, “We love one another and we had really wonderful times of making up!” Then he would wink. So, honestly, I have had the great benefit of being taught all my life and shown a unity

in Jesus even when my parents differed on political issues. I really did! And throughout this message, I am going to share with you some of the principles I learned from them that they modeled to help us understand that it doesn't matter what party you are we are to be unified loving believers, in Christ. Remember in 1 Corinthians 12 that there is diversity in the church. That is a good thing. It's not all bad. Praise God, the church is a diverse body in unity.

Most people, who want Jesus to be a Democrat or Republican, do so because they want to know that Christ backs them up. They want to have some heavenly clout! They want God on their side, to prove they are right. But today, I want us all to know that there can be Christians in church that are both Republican and Democrat and they can sit on any side they want! Some of us have forgotten that! Some of us get really mad about that. Some of us need to take a look in God's mirror, and remember who we are looking at.

Paul reminds us in Galatians that Christ saves us from all ways and places of life: *"For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise"* (Galatians 3: 26-29). Praise the Lord we don't have to change nationality, or party, or gender, race, skin color, or economic status to be saved! We are all the same at the foot of the cross! We could add to that list in verse 27, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, male or female, ...Democrat or Republican... for you are all one in Christ." So the question we face today is: "Are we unified and one in Jesus?" So here are the three main ideas that I want us to follow for being unified loving believers, in Christ.

**Principle #1- It doesn't matter which side of the aisle we sit, we need to remember to meet in the middle because if we don't agree with someone who is a brother or sister in Christ, we at least owe them a debt of love.** One doesn't expect people to believe as we believe; yet we do owe them the loving courtesy of loving them as Christ did. Remember that Paul told us at the beginning of Romans 13:1, *"Show humble, submissive, respect to all in authority."* As a citizen to a government that is morally corrupt, I am called by God to obey and show respect to its authority. God has put each one there. They are but puppets in the big scheme of things; playing a part in God's Sovereign plan. I love Kenneth Wuest's translation: *"Let every soul put himself habitually in subjection to authorities which hold position over them, for there is not an authority except that is ordained by God. Moreover, the existing authorities stand permanently ordained by God."* In verse seven he says, *"Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor."* Then in verse eight he reminds us that we should owe one thing always: ***"the debt of loving behavior and action."*** But the love here isn't "our love" and it isn't the world's "love" because Scripture says, *"Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever."* (John 2:15-17) If God is love (1 John 4:9-10) and Christ tells us to love as He loved, *"As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love"* (John 15:9-10), then we need the love of Jesus. How do we get that love? By saving

faith and trust. We need to be honest with ourselves and realize our love isn't the love we are called to show Democrats, Republicans, and those lost in this world; it is Christ's love. Our love isn't perfect enough, "*Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends (John 15:13)*. It isn't selfless and sinless enough, because Jesus' love was, "*in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5:8)*". When we are saved, the Holy Spirit supernaturally infuses us with Christ's love so we can show it, "*because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us (Rom. 5:5)*". We can't pay a debt with counterfeit money any more than we can pay a debt of love to someone with sinful selfish man-made love. That forgiveness debt in Christ is a debt that we can never pay Christ back, and so we are always indebted to love brothers and sisters with His debt over us. Origen, one of the church fathers, said, "*The debt of love remains with us permanently and never leaves us. This is a debt which we pay every day and still forever owe.*" And the modern commentator Leon Morris wrote, "*We can never say, 'I have done all the loving I need to do.' Because love is a permanent obligation, a debt impossible to discharge.*" We all owe it to Jesus to cross the aisle and show godly Christ-like love in our words, deeds, actions, and tongue. That is the secret.

**Principle #2- It doesn't matter what side of the aisle we remain on, we are always commanded to cross over ourselves and love as Jesus did.** Let's go to Jesus, who is the Savior of Republicans, Democrats, Independents, Communists, Libertarians, and any other political tag we wear, who is giving us the greatest commandment. In Matthew 22 we see the political and religious governing authorities not trying to get Christ to join their causes, but trying to discredit Him. Remember these are the people who were Israel's conservatives and liberals. They all tried to trick Christ on political and religious issues. Notice that verse 24 says, "*But when the Pharisees heard that He had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together.*" That word "silenced" literally means the "muzzling of an ox." They were so dumbfounded, that the mouth opened and nothing came out. They desired to attack Jesus with respect of God's authority. They decided to question His reasoning for right and wrong. If they could get Him to claim just one command of God, they would use the other commands to try to show Jesus was contradicting God. They were trying to prove that He didn't love God.

So these political and religious leaders asked a question, verse 35-36, "*Then one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, and saying, 'Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?'*" So Jesus says, "*You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with your entire mind.*' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: '*You shall love your neighbor as yourself.*' On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets" (vs. 37-40). What He was saying, is if a person loves God, he/she won't worship another god; he/she won't go against any of the Ten Commandments, or any right or wrong Scripture. If we love God we won't even want to be better than another person; we will never do a wrong that hurts or abuses our neighbor. We will not steal from them, hate them, kill them, or criticize them. That is why this is the first and greatest commandment; because in keeping this one command, it allows us to keep all the commands. But again, I want to remind us, that the commands were given not to make us righteous like the Pharisees or to make us judgemental like the Sadducees. It was given to show we fall short in our love. Our love isn't good enough because it isn't God's love. If we want to love God in this way, we need the Holy Spirit's love and to be born again.

Jesus didn't demonize those leaders. He could have. He didn't imply that if you were a Pharisee, than you were not on God's team, because God was already working and saving some of them like Joseph of Arimathea, (Luke 23:51), and Nicodemus (John 3; 19:39). My dad reminded me that we are believers who love God first, before we are anything political. He reminded me also that we don't change our values. When a vote would come up, I would ask dad, "Hey, how can you vote for this guy, he pushes abortion?" My dad would say to me, "Listen, there are sinners who are Republicans too, and who hold views I don't follow. I remember to vote for a person not because of my party, but because I've searched and studied his views and see if they line up with what I think God says. There are some Democrats I will not be voting for, and there are some Republicans I will not be voting for. You must ask yourself this question, 'Son, will Jesus call you into account for this man you voted for?'" I never forgot that, and I've practiced that. I am not afraid to vote across party "aisles" all through my life. I still do that. I realize that some people do not hold my views or morals. I try to vote for those who will best serve Christ, and I love with Christ-like love those who don't.

We need to remember that when we vote with the 'law of Christ-like love' we can't go wrong. And don't mistreat or threaten those who don't do it this way. Romans 14:1-2 says, "*Receive one who is weak in the faith, but not to disputes over doubtful things. For one believes he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats only vegetables. Let not him who eats despise him who does not eat, and let not him who does not eat judge him who eats; for God has received him. Who are you to judge another's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand.*" Who are we to judge another who is accountable to Jesus? But you may say, "Pastor, these issues are not about vegetables and eating broccoli; they are about some very right and wrong behavior." I say, "Yes, that is true. Do what you know is right, and trust God to take care of that other brother." Romans 14 says, "*Why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written: 'As I live, says the LORD, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God.'* So then each of us shall give account of himself to God. Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our brother's way" (Romans 14: 10-13). You know Paul reminds us that we must watch to see if we are causing others to stumble. Do you know what my definition is of "stumbling block?" It is causing believers to act or do something and as they do it, it is not in faith, and it causes them to sin.

#### Discussing Politics On Facebook



And now I'm going to mention one of my stumbling blocks that most people do whether they are Democrat or Republican: **"STOP WITH SOME OF THE THINGS YOU PUT ON FACEBOOK!"** Read the question for the week on the back of our

outline and see if any of it is relevant to crossing the aisle. There are some things we don't need to know about you or what you think or believe. Proverbs 18:2 says, "*A fool takes no pleasure in understanding, but only in expressing his opinion.*" And, Proverbs 17:28 helps me all the time, because it says, "*Even a fool who keeps silent is considered wise; when he closes his lips, he is deemed intelligent.*" Do you know how many people don't know how foolish I really am, because I don't say things? I believe that many times we put things we believe that are true on social media, but they offend and cause other Christians to stumble. It's not in love. I have to tell you that I continue to have numerous occasions when someone from a different party comes and says to me,

“Pastor, I can’t believe that this brother or sister put this out there!” Or, “Pastor, I am tired and uncomfortable at my small group because of the way people talk about their leaders, acting as if we must behave or believe this way to come to a good church.” Or, “Pastor, I’m not coming to prayer meeting anymore, because of the way people pray about the government leaders. They can’t do it with Christ’s love and compassion; they do it as if there is a ‘them and us.’” Hey, like it or not, we are to love as Christ!

**Principle #3- No matter what position we take on either side of the aisle, in church or politics, we are to meet in unity for Christ’s reputation and for a winsome witness.** Have you ever wondered what it would be like to be in prayer circle with Jesus? We don’t have to wonder. John 17 shows us what Jesus prayed for us. What even amazes me more is that He was being submissive to the evils of the governing authorities, knowing He would die for us on the cross. Even with facing the greatest injustice of all the world, Jesus was praying *“Abba, Father, all things are possible for You. Take this cup away from Me; nevertheless, not what I will, but what You will”* (Mark 14:36). Jesus didn’t feel like dying for our sins. But this is what He prayed: *“I pray also for those who will believe in Me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as You are in Me and I am in You. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that You have sent me. I have given them the glory that You gave Me, that they may be one as We are one— I in them and You in Me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that You sent me and have loved them even as You have loved Me”* (John 17:20-23). Did you get His absolute criteria? They are **one**, they are **unified**, so that others will come to love and know Him as Savior. If we as a church are not being unified in Christ, it will cost the lives of many for eternity. Those are the stakes we are playing with when we attack each other as Democrats and Republicans in our country. “But Pastor, what if an unsaved person can say and attack in anyway he wants- that’s not fair.” Yes, but the testimony of Jesus is at stake. My dad used to say, “Your mom and I may not agree in all we believe and think, but we have this one thing as the most important one: we love Jesus, and we want Him to be known more than we want our own opinions known. We forgive and love and make up, for you as children to see the love of Christ.” I mean, brothers and sisters, is this not the truth?

There is a man by the name of Bernard Brown Jr. I don’t know anything of his political slant or belief. He was the president of a group called Kenneth Stone Health Management Care in Georgia. Years ago, Bernard Brown Jr. worked at a local hospital. While he was working at this hospital, there was a patient who accidentally spilled his glass of water all over the floor. The patient was afraid that if he were to get up he would slip on the water. So he simply called the nurse’s aid to clean up the puddle. There was a hospital policy that said if there is a small puddle, a nurse’s aid should clean it up. If the nurse’s aid decided it was a big puddle, then one should call the housekeeping department to clean it up. Well, the nurse’s aid felt the puddle was too big and called the staff from housekeeping, who arrived and announced it was still too small a puddle for housekeeping. So an argument broke out. The nurse’s aid said, “It’s not my responsibility, it’s obviously a larger puddle, and you clean it up.” The housekeeper said, “No, this is really a small one, you can handle this.” The poor patient in bed was watching this argument, and then, when he couldn’t take it any longer, he picked up the water pitcher and dumped it entirely on the floor and said, “Now is that a big puddle, or a small puddle? Is it big enough to decide what you both

are going to do?" So, the argument was ended, and the nurse's aid and the housekeeper both took a towel and cleaned up the mess.

The question for all of us here today in light of all we have learned is, "What is our personal responsibility?" Don't wait for the other person to cross the aisle and clean up the mess we face as a country. To be good citizens for Christ, we owe the love of Jesus to this world which faces so many troubles and trials. But do you know what? God is greater than all of them. The psalmist writes that *"the Lord has established His throne in heaven, and His kingdom rules over all"* (Psalm 103:19). God is in control, no matter what form a government may take. Whatever the form of government, it will be imperfect, because it seeks to rule over men who are sinners and because the men who rule are sinners. The only perfect system of government is that which our Lord Himself will establish when He returns to rule over the earth in perfect righteousness. But I must warn you that He is not only coming as Savior, but as Judge of the earth.

Are we willing to stand and look in the mirror of God's Word together, and not point out if someone has a smudge of Democrat or a stain of Republican, or any other label? Are we willing to clean up the mess? Are we willing to stop pointing at the other person's messes and faults, and let God show us if our rebellious hearts are really the ones that need changed by His love? Are we willing to kill our pride? Pride kills us. Pride says, "I don't need God or anyone else's help. I can handle it by myself." Oh, no we can't! We absolutely need God and we desperately need each other.

What ways has God shown today our pride and rebellious hearts? When we have a stronger desire to do our will than God's will. When we lean too much on our own understanding and experience, we don't seek God's guidance through prayer and His Word. When we rely on our own strengths and abilities we don't depend on the power of the Holy Spirit. When we are more concerned about controlling others than developing self-control we are showing pride. When we are too busy doing "important" things to take the time to do little acts of love for others. Thinking we are more humble, spiritual, religious, or devoted than others who may not be the same party we are. Often feeling that our needs are more important than another's need. Considering ourselves better than others because of our own academic, artistic, or athletic abilities and accomplishments. Pride shows up when one feels others must "accept me just as I am, and NOT to judge me and accept the way I live." That is actually pride and rebellion of our hearts. Or, "I won't change because I don't want to be wrong." Pride also is being concerned about getting the credit we feel we deserve. These are all ways pride kills Christ-like love. When we give into our fears, we fall into being self-centered, and our minds are so clouded that we only begin to think about things that frighten us. God doesn't want us to be mastered by anything, including fear. When I was a boy, it was the fear of death that God used to bring me to true salvation. We also need to look into God's mirror and see if He is showing us our rebellious hearts. A "godly rebel" is a misnomer. It's an oxymoron. Has God today shown you and revealed your rebel heart? Then confess whatever the Lord brings to your mind. Look down that church aisle. It is not there to divide us believers, it's there to join believers and walk to the altar of Christ. Look down the halls of eternity, and you will see the Jewish religious establishment on one side of Jesus, and the Roman Empire on the other, and it leads to Golgotha's cross, where all our sins were bled for and taken away by the One. This is the place where we are loved with a supernatural love that will not let us go, and with a reminder that heaven is our home

and we are His citizens passing through. Will you walk with me to the cross today?  
What do you see?

Pray with me,

*“Dear Heavenly Father, You have said in the Bible, Your mirror, that rebellion is the same thing as the sin of witchcraft and as bad as idolatry. We live in a world where our hearts are idol factories. We cling and hold to things that are not You. I pray you will show us all the ways we have been rebellious and choose to adopt a submissive spirit and a loving heart today. Lord, we agree that we have been proud in many areas of our hearts, and thank You for forgiving us our pride and selfishness at the cross. Will You, Holy Spirit, strengthen us and allow us to pray for the unity of Palisades Community Bible Church? Use a message like this to win others and show Christ to our community? If we are truly in Christ, why would we allow our church to be divided by political platforms, or by lesser “kings?” As we walk an aisle on a Tuesday this November, it doesn’t matter who we vote for, so much as we win or lose as believers every single day by our behavior between now and November. May we love each other every single day as You loved us. While we struggle with how we can’t believe how anybody can believe certain things, what we really need is for people to say, “I believe in Christ!” May we be unified in You, Jesus, and we pray in our coming wonderful King’s Name, amen.”*

**As Christ is my first and best King,  
Pastor Corvin <><**

Quote: “God governs the world, and we have only to do our duty wisely and leave the issue to Him.” ...  
John Jay (1745-1829)

Quote: “The Bible is the rock upon which our republic rest.” ... Andrew Jackson (1767-1845)

Quote: “When they call the roll in the Senate, the senators do not know whether to answer “present” or “not guilty.” ... Theodore Roosevelt (1858-1919)

